

10

The planning area has eight historically significant parks and greenbelts that are important to the community. Oak Hill Park, Gaines Creek Park, Convict Hill Quarry Park, Legend Oaks Park, Williamson Creek Greenbelt, Latta Branch Greenbelt, and Barton Creek Wilderness Park are maintained by the City. Travis County maintains Windmill Run Park.

Because Oak Hill's street network is poorly laid out for pedestrians, stakeholders would like to expand the trail system throughout the planning area. An expanded trail network would connect parks and other destinations.

Community members also expressed a need for additional recreational facilities and parks. New parks should be created that include activity spaces and recreational opportunities for all ages.

Implementation notes following recommendations explain comments from Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) staff. Appendix G provides an overview of how PARC plans, creates, and maintains trails.



Figure 10-1: Gaines Creek Park Information Kiosk



Figure 10-2: Overgrown creek bed in Oak Hill



Figure 10-3: Williamson Creek

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

10.A. Expand and develop park-like recreational options, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

10.A.1

All neighborhoods in the Oak Hill area should have access to safe, convenient and well-equipped park facilities.

10.A.1a—Provide bathroom facilities and water fountains in Oak Hill parks where needed and appropriate.

10.B. Establish a network of greenspaces and trails connecting neighborhoods.

10.B.1

Create new parks with more active spaces within the planning area to mitigate overcrowding of existing facilities and serve neighborhood residents that are farthest away from existing facilities.

10.B.1a—Identify potential parkland to serve neighborhood residents on the far western area of the planning boundary who are farthest from existing parks and facilities.

10.B.1b—Explore possibility of a small pocket park behind Old Fredericksburg Road and West Creek Drive. By providing benches and proper landscaping, the vacant strip of land fronting Old Fredericksburg Road has the potential to serve residents in its immediate area.

10.B.1c—Stakeholders feel that more pocket parks are needed west of the “Y,” preferably north of U.S. Highway 290 and south of State Highway 71 to serve residents of the area.

10.B.1d—Within new and existing parks, stakeholders want to incorporate active recreational spaces such as ball fields or soccer fields.

10.B.1e—Seek opportunities for the creation of a recreation community center for seniors and youth in the planning area. If possible, locate the community center within a new or existing park that has appropriate arterial road access. Stakeholders feel that there should be two recreation centers, one located north of U.S. Highway 290 and another south of the highway.

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10.B.2f—Identify an appropriate location for an ice-skating rink for youth and adults of the planning area and nearby neighborhoods.

10.B.2g—Stakeholders want to seek opportunities to collaborate with community organizations and public entities to share recreational facilities.

10.B.2h—When AISD builds new schools in Oak Hill, the City and AISD should seek opportunities to develop joint facilities to be used by both the school and Oak Hill residents.

10.C. Preserve and restore natural beauty of open spaces in order to maintain Oak Hill's Hill Country character.

10.C.1

Explore creative mechanisms to preserve more open spaces within the Oak Hill planning area.

10.C.1a—Stakeholders want to encourage clustered developments in the planning area to create more public open spaces. Clustered development on a property can not only provide open space for the community but also preserves environmentally sensitive areas and the rural character of the neighborhoods. For more information on the positive impacts of cluster development, please refer to Chapter 9: Neighborhood Design.

10.C.1b—Stakeholders want to seek opportunities to collaborate with community organizations and public entities such as AISD to share recreational facilities. The soccer field at Small Middle School is open for public use after school hours. Residents want to explore opportunities to collaborate with entities when new facilities are being planned in the area. Note: AISD already has a formal agreement with the South Austin Soccer Association about the use of the fields adjacent to Small and Patton. This is an example where the District has worked with this private entity to cooperate providing youth activities for the community.

10.C.1c—Request City Council to evaluate an amendment to the SOS Ordinance that would allow up to 8,000 sq. ft. of additional impervious cover for public facilities including parking lots that provide access to City of Austin parkland.

10.D. Preserve and enhance environmental resources including watersheds, air quality, and wildlife corridors.

10.D.1

Explore methods to enhance the natural environment in Oak Hill area.

10.D.1a—In order to provide for functional wildlife corridors, find ways to integrate

wildlife corridors with water resources.

10.D.1b—On all publicly accessible greenbelts and nature trails, ensure adequate parking is available; explore parking agreements with civic and public uses, such as churches and schools, in addition to other sources.

10.E. Integrate neighborhoods, green spaces, and major destinations to increase connectivity.

10.E.1

Seek appropriate methods to fund creation of hike and bike trails, active outdoor recreational space and open spaces within the Oak Hill planning area.

10.E.1a—In the event resources become available for open space, if possible these resources should be exclusive to the Oak Hill planning area.

10.E.1b—Specific areas in Oak Hill should be targeted for open space. (See map of park recommendation areas.)

10.E.1c—If funding becomes available, establish an allocation plan with different segments of the Oak Hill planning area designated to receive funding.

10.E.1d—Oak Hill stakeholders should continue to seek funding sources (other than Proposition 2 monies) for community-based civic uses.

10.F. Create safe and secure greenbelts and nature trails along Williamson Creek and other area creeks.

10.F.1

Expand and enhance the existing trail system to connect to major parks, greenbelts, commercial centers, creeks, and destinations within the planning area.

10.F.1a—Create a trail connection from the intersection of William Cannon Drive and Brush County Road to Williamson Creek. Several property owners along Williamson Creek west of the “Y” do not feel comfortable creating a trail through their properties. They have concerns about safety even if the trail were separated by a fence or vegetative buffer. Some residents want to have a greenbelt protecting Williamson Creek and providing recreational opportunities to the residents. Extending the greenbelt around State Highway 71 to the Nature Conservancy would allow wildlife to traverse within the greenbelt area.

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10.F.1b—Provide a trail connection from Oak Hill Park to the existing trails in Gaines Creek Park.

10.F.1c—Connect trails to major destinations such as parks, schools, and greenbelts to increase trail useability. Community members feel that highways hinder connectivity within the Oak Hill planning area. Hence, expanding the pedestrian and trail network would help residents get around the neighborhood walking or on a bike.

10.F.1d—Connect neighborhoods east of FM 1826 to the neighborhoods west of FM 1826. Stakeholders feel this would be an important connection because of major destinations such as Seton Hospital and the middle school located along FM 1826.

10.F.1e—Provide trail connections between the Austin Community College (ACC) campus and the local neighborhoods.

10.F.1f—Provide a trail connection from Latta Branch and Legend Oaks Parks to U.S. Highway 290.

10.F.1g—Provide a trail connection from Latta Branch Park to Slaughter Lane.

10.F.1h—Oak Hill residents should be encouraged to join and support the Oak Hill Trails Association to continue their work towards implementing trail projects in the Oak Hill area. They should continue to gather necessary funds, resources, and support to increase connectivity in Oak Hill.

10.F.1i—Provide more police patrols in Windmill Run Park. Currently, residents in the area are involved in patrolling the neighborhoods.

10.F.1j—Seek methods to maintain security of neighborhoods adjacent to trails, greenbelts, and parks.

GAINES CREEK PARK

Gaines Creek Park is located on U.S. Highway 290 and Republic of Texas Boulevard. The 38-acre park was enrolled in the City's Adopt-a-Park Program in December 2006. Soon after, a team of volunteers formed to beautify the park.

CONVICT HILL QUARRY PARK

Convict Hill Quarry Park is located on Convict Hill Road between U.S. Highway 290 and Escarpment Boulevard and was established in the fall of 2005. In the ensuing months, Friends of the Quarry formed and worked hard to add to and maintain the park's amenities.

GAINES CREEK BEAUTIFICATION TEAM

(The following information was provided by Frank Krystopher, a member of the Gaines Creek Nature Park Team)



Vision: Gaines Creek Beautification Team seeks volunteers to maintain, expand, and improve a trail system through the park that will encourage use of the park. Also, seek help to beautify the perimeter, especially the main entrance by using organic materials, mostly native or appropriately adapted plants, and regular maintenance of the park to encourage enjoyment and use.

Amenities: The Oak Hill Business and Professional Group donated a picnic table and two benches at the entrance that are in use daily. Also, the kiosk and fountain are the newest additions to the park. The current trail system was created by the Youth Corps through a Parks grant that was awarded years ago. New trails are being planned and when established, would be put into the global positioning system (GPS) and inserted in a new map.

Participation in It's My Park Day 2007: In spite of the cold windy weather, the Gaines Creek Park volunteers have accomplished a great deal at this small park. The entrance area has been heavily planted with over 100 plant donations from volunteers, and looks much more inviting.

Future Projects: A successful meeting with the City's Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) staff means that something will be done this year about the flooding creek bed at the entrance to the trails. Possibly in late July 2007, work would begin on the creek crossing. The Gaines Creek bed is heavily clogged and volunteers with saws are needed. The team is reviewing a program from the City Park Forestry that would provide up to 30 Texas native trees of all kinds for the park and PARD would help plan where they would go, and plant and water them.

If you would like to provide input on trail planning and/or volunteer, please contact Frank Krystopher at bluesky2u@austin.rr.com.

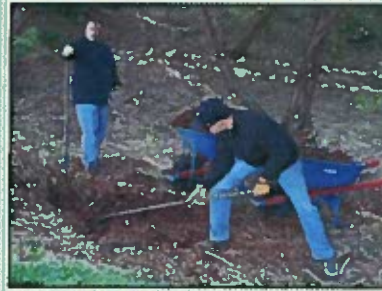
FRIENDS OF CONVICT HILL QUARRY PARK

(The following information was written by Jim Turney, organizer of the group)

Convict Hill Quarry Park is the last visible evidence of the quarry where limestone was removed to rebuild the Texas state house in the early 1880s. Convicts were used for much of the work, leading to the name Convict Hill. One of the few really natural parks in the area, this park is almost 3 acres and sits on Convict Hill Road between Robert Kleburg Lane and Shadowridge Run.

In April 2005, the "Friends of Convict Hill" Group was formed with the mission to clean up large amounts of branches and debris that were obstructing access to the park and make it usable for the community again.

WE MADE TRAILS – From the first day of work and for several work days later, we hauled out huge piles of branches and debris. These branches were chipped into mulch by the City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department and used to make a system of trails. We were assisted in trail planning by the Trail Tamers organization, which has planned trails in many Austin parks. We now have a trail system that provides access to the entire park, while preserving many areas of quarry rock piles and natural plant and tree growth. Much of the rock work was done by volunteer Girl and Cub scouts on major work days.



Volunteers at work



Built Trail



Volunteers on "It's My Park Day"

WE HAD LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS ON "IT'S MY PARK DAY" – There were 40 volunteers (including our own "Friends") in 2006 and over 70 in 2007 during "It's my Park" days, which also included about 32 Boy Scouts doing Eagle Scout projects, American Youthworks, a group of college and church leaders from Waco, Trail Tamers groups, University Rotary, and First State

Bank in Oak Hill. Austin Parks Foundation provided tools for work days and sometimes also volunteered to help.

WE GOT A GRANT FROM THE AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION – Our request was accepted in 2006 and we received half the amount asked for. We raised the rest from individual contributions. Our biggest individual donor was Constable Richard McCain, who believes in supporting and working towards the preservation of local parks and history.



"Friends" leaders, Heidi Armstrong, Gary Anderson, and Jim Turney receiving a grant check from Patrick Johnson, Vice President of First State Bank.

WE GOT A SIDEWALK – In January 2007, the City of Austin, Public Works Department created a sidewalk along the front of the park. They also constructed an entrance to the park. This section of the street is used by many walkers and runners, some with baby strollers and/or dogs.

THE PARK WAS OFFICIALLY DEDICATED – On April 21, 2007 the park was dedicated to official recognition. In less than two years, entirely with volunteer effort and funds, it was transformed from a neglected “jungle” into an inviting neighborhood attraction. To mark the official opening of the park, a ribbon was cut by (left to right) Warren Struss, director of Austin Parks Department, “Friends” volunteer leaders, CEO of American Youthworks, and Congressman Lloyd Doggett.

OTHER AMENITIES – We used the grant money and donated funds to buy some wildflower seeds, pay American Youthworks to make 2 stone benches, and build a cedar fence with rails. Also, some of the Scouts built a rock wall across the front of the park with stones from the quarry itself. The wall and the cedar fence allow direct access to the park while keeping the interior quiet and separate from traffic noise.

FUTURE PLANS – As more people discover the park (especially since being featured in the Oak Hill Gazette), we plan to continue meeting in coming years, to focus mainly on maintenance work. Some of our projects include: an Eagle Scout project, a Barn Swallow house, a water runoff and catch basin, and a kiosk to display historical and site information that the Parks Department has promised to install. We are also seeking help with traffic control for Convict Hill Road, especially on the downhill section in front of the park.

Friends of Convict Hill Quarry Park are proud of the results of our efforts, and pleased to share this park with neighbors near and far.

CONTACT US – We welcome any kind of help. If you want to make comments and/or get on our email list, please email:

drjet@austin.rr.com. For more information, go to our blog, <http://convicthillquarrypark.blogspot.com/>.



Construction of a sidewalk



Cutting the ribbon



Volunteers building a stone wall



... and a cedar fence



Volunteers at work

WINDMILL RUN PARK

Windmill Run Park is located off of State Highway 71 on Kirkham Cove and is maintained by Travis County. The park has a ball field, playscape area, picnic tables, and foot bridges crossing a tributary of Williamson Creek. It also has trails to provide residents with hiking opportunities and views of the remarkable Hill Country scenery.

10.A. Expand and develop park-like recreational options, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

10.A.1

All neighborhoods in the Oak Hill area should have access to safe, convenient and well-equipped park facilities.

10.A.1a—Provide bathroom facilities and water fountains in Oak Hill parks where needed and appropriate.

Implementation Note: Travis County may use funds from its fee-in-lieu-of-parkland-dedications account to fund the recommended improvements to Windmill Run Park. It may also include the recommended improvements in the next bond fund package, tentatively scheduled for 2009 or 2010.



Figure 10-4: Trail at Windmill Run Park

Funding for Parks and Recreational Facilities

- Since the 1970s, residents of Austin have periodically approved bond packages that fund specific projects, including many parks projects. The 2006 bond package allocated funds towards parks projects, though Oak Hill is not designated to receive funds.
- PARD also funds parks projects through its annual budget. Depending on the needs of the neighborhoods, PARD can request additional funding from City Council.
- Private and public grants are also available. PARD has received grants from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and the Austin Parks Foundation.
- Parkland Dedication Fees are collected when residential properties are subdivided by private property owners. These fees can be used to purchase land and add facilities to existing parks.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

PARD oversees parks, preserves, many miles of hike and bike trails, and other facilities for Austin. One of the City's goals is to maintain approximately twenty-four acres of parks and open space for every 1000 residents of Austin.

PARKLAND ACQUISITION

At the Parks & Open Space meeting, stakeholders asked for more parks in the planning area. They also noted that many of the parks in Oak Hill do not have places for sports and active recreation.

Neighborhood residents cherish the existing ball fields at Williamson Creek West Park, the YMCA, and Windmill Run Park. However, the fields are often overused because they serve a large population. The soccer field at Small Middle School closes at 10 pm, making it difficult for residents to use the facility past that time.



Figure 10-5: Ball field

How does the City choose new parkland?

In order to provide ample amount of recreational opportunities and to preserve Austin's natural resources, Austin has an aggressive parkland acquisition program. One of the goals is to maintain approximately 24 acres of parks and open space for every 1000 citizens. The Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes a Gap Analysis that identifies gaps in park service areas. A gap indicates an area that is deficient in park amenities given the population of the service areas.

PARD uses money generated from grants, bonds, and parkland dedication fees to acquire property for new parks. PARD also accepts gifts of parkland. PARD uses a number of guidelines when acquiring new parkland:

- The property should have a variety of basic features, such as relatively level ground with environmental, historic, and scenic amenities.
- Adequate road connections to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Schools and other important attractors nearby.
- Connections with other creeks, greenbelts, and trails.
- The land should be reasonably priced.
- Potential for land to be sold in a projected growth area.
- Room for provide sufficient parking.

10.B. Establish a network of greenspaces and trails connecting neighborhoods.

10.B.1

Create new parks with more activity spaces within the planning area to mitigate overcrowding of existing facilities and serve neighborhood residents that are farthest away from existing facilities.

10.B.1a—Identify potential parkland to serve neighborhood residents on the far western area of the planning boundary who are farthest from existing parks and facilities.

10.B.1b—Explore possibility of a small pocket park behind Old Fredericksburg Road and West Creek Drive. By providing benches and proper landscaping, the vacant strip of land fronting Old Fredericksburg Road has the potential to serve residents in its immediate area.

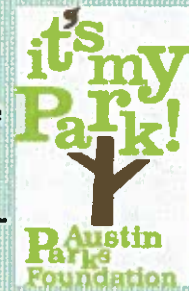
10.B.1c—Stakeholders feel that more pocket parks are needed west of the “Y,” preferably to the south of U.S. Highway 290 and to the north of State Highway 71 to serve residents of these area.

10.B.1d—Within new and existing parks, stakeholders want to incorporate active recreational spaces such as ball fields and/or soccer fields.

10.B.1e—Seek opportunities for the creation of a recreation community center for

How you can help beautify your park

Austin Parks Foundation provides resources to neighborhood volunteer groups to create, sustain, and enhance beautiful and active parks throughout the City of Austin. The foundation works in partnership with PARD and other entities to initiate parks projects throughout the city. Austin Parks Foundation also fosters community ownership of local parks by hosting an annual city-wide volunteer workday called “It’s My Park Day!”



Keep Austin Beautiful empowers citizens by providing them with the tools necessary to enhance their community environment. They also host projects that clean up and beautify public spaces such as parks, creeks, streets, and neighborhoods. Keep Austin Beautiful also provides neighborhood organizations and volunteer groups with supplies for clean up projects.



seniors and youth in the planning area. If possible, locate the community center within a new or existing park that has appropriate arterial road access. Stakeholders feel that there should be two recreation centers, one located north of U.S. Highway 290 and another south of the highway.

10.B.1f—Identify an appropriate location for an ice-skating rink for youth and adults of the planning area and nearby neighborhoods.

10.B.2g—Stakeholders want to seek opportunities to collaborate with community organizations and public entities to share recreational facilities.

10.B.2h—When AISD builds new schools in Oak Hill, the City and AISD should seek opportunities to develop joint facilities to be used by both the school and Oak Hill residents.

Implementation Note: PARD staff realizes the need for additional parks and recreational facilities in the Oak Hill area. Staff will take these recommendations into consideration when sufficient funds become available. These recommendations will be balanced along with other parks projects throughout the City of Austin.

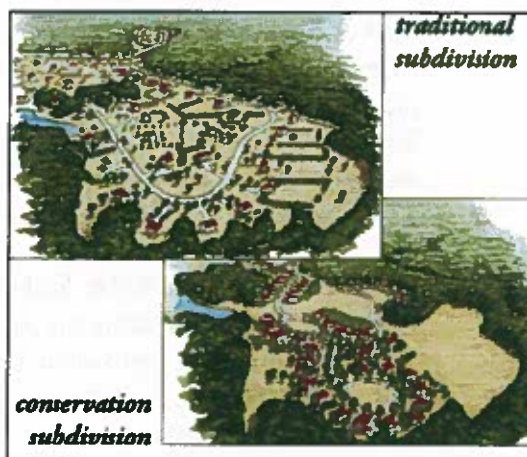


Figure 10-7: Traditional and conservation (cluster) developments

10.C. Preserve and restore natural beauty of open spaces in order to maintain Oak Hill's Hill Country character.

10.C.1

Explore creative mechanisms to preserve more open spaces within the Oak Hill planning area.

10.C.1a—Stakeholders want to encourage clustered developments in the planning area to create more public open spaces. Clustered development on a property can not only provide open space for the community but also preserves environmentally sensitive areas and the rural character of the neighborhoods. For more information on the positive impacts of cluster development, please refer to Chapter 9: Neighborhood Design.

10.C.1b—Stakeholders want to seek opportunities to collaborate with community organizations and public entities such as AISD to share recreational facilities. The soccer

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field at Small Middle School is open for public use after school hours. Residents want to explore opportunities to collaborate with entities when new facilities are being planned in the area. Note: AISD already has a formal agreement with the South Austin Soccer Association about the use of the fields adjacent to Small and Patton. This is an example where the District has worked with this private entity to cooperate providing youth activities for the community.

Implementation Note: Stakeholders could explore the possibility of forming a subcommittee concentrating on parks and recreational facility issues in the planning area. The subcommittee can solicit support and funds and collaborate with City staff, AISD, and other agencies to help in creation of more open spaces in the area. The committee can also help organize support on specific parks projects that may appear on the next bond election in 2010.

10.C.1c—Request City Council to evaluate an amendment to the SOS Ordinance that would allow up to 8,000 sq. ft. of additional impervious cover for public facilities including parking lots that provide access to City of Austin parkland.

Oak Wilt in Texas

Oak wilt is a type of fungal disease that kills oak trees by invading and disabling their water-conducting system. Although all oaks can be affected by this destructive disease, some oak species (such as red oaks, Texas red oak, Shumard oak, and blackjack oak) are more vulnerable to being infected.

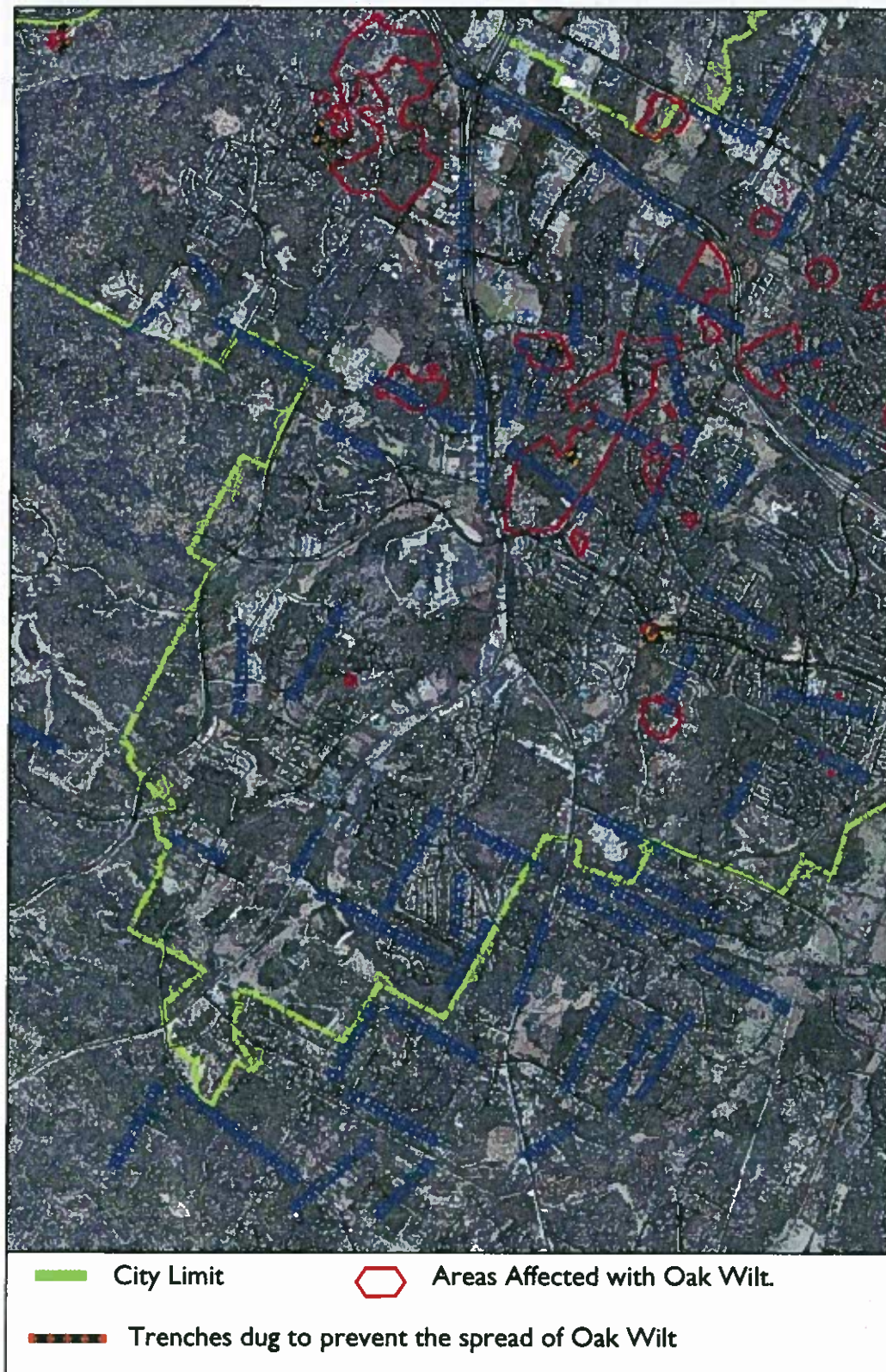
Oak trees affected with oak wilt develop yellow veins that eventually turn brown. Affected oak trees also tend to defoliate at a rapid rate. Oak trees often times develop fungal mats that could be a reliable indicator of oak wilt infection. Fungal mats are formed as narrow cracks in the bark of an oak tree eventually leading to hollow areas between the bark and wood.



Residents should call City Arborist Chris Dolan at (512) 974-1881 if they have oak trees that may be infected by oak wilt. The city arborist will look at the infection and may offer suggestions to treat the oak wilt. One way to treat oak wilt involves trenching at least 4 feet deep to disrupt root connections responsible for transmission of the disease. Eliminating diseased trees, handling firewood properly, and painting wounds on healthy oak trees are other preventative methods for oak wilt.

For more information on oak wilt, please visit: www.texasoakwilt.org.

Figure 10-8: Oak wilt centers in the planning area



10.D. Preserve and enhance environmental resources including watersheds, air quality, and wildlife corridors.

10.D.1

Explore methods to enhance the natural environment in Oak Hill area.

10.D.1a—In order to provide for functional wildlife corridors, find ways to integrate wildlife corridors with water resources.

10.D.1b—On all publicly accessible greenbelts and nature trails, ensure adequate parking is available; explore parking agreements with civic and public uses, such as churches and schools, in addition to other sources.

10.E. Integrate neighborhoods green spaces, and major destinations to increase connectivity.

10.E.1

Seek appropriate methods to fund creation of hike and bike trails, active outdoor recreational space and open spaces within the Oak Hill planning area.

10.E.1a—In the event resources become available for open space, if possible these resources should be exclusive to the Oak Hill planning area.

10.E.1b—Specific areas in Oak Hill should be targeted for open space. (See map of park recommendation areas.)

10.E.1c—If funding becomes available, establish an allocation plan within different segments of the Oak Hill planning area designated to receive funding.

10.E.1d—Oak Hill stakeholders should continue to seek funding sources (other than Proposition 2 monies) for community-based civic uses.

TRAILS AND GREENBELTS

Stakeholders have expressed a desire for greater trail connectivity throughout the planning area. Residents understand the complexity of expanding road infrastructure due to the environmentally sensitive features of the area. Additionally, the suburban nature of the planning area does not allow much pedestrian connectivity. Trails and greenbelts were suggested as an alternative way to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Residents have stated that they want to use trails to experience the scenic Hill Country beauty and to connect to major destinations such as the hospital, schools, and commercial centers.

10.F. Create safe and secure greenbelts and nature trails along Williamson Creek and other area creeks.

10.F.1

Expand and enhance the existing trail system to connect to major parks, greenbelts, commercial centers, creeks, and destinations within the planning area.

10. F. 1a—Create a trail connection from the intersection of William Cannon Drive and Brush County Road to Williamson Creek. Several property owners along Williamson Creek west of the “Y” do not feel comfortable creating a trail through their properties. They have concerns about safety even if the trail were separated by a fence or vegetative buffer. Some residents want to have a greenbelt protecting Williamson Creek and providing recreational opportunities to the residents. Extending the greenbelt around State Highway 71 to the Nature Conservancy would allow wildlife to travel within the greenbelt area.

10.F.1b—Provide a trail connection from Oak Hill Park to the existing trails in Gaines Creek Park.

10.F.1c—Connect trails to major destinations such as parks, schools, and greenbelts to increase trail usability. Community members feel that highways hinder connectivity within the Oak Hill planning area. Hence, expanding the pedestrian and trail network would help residents get around the



Figure 10-9: Windmill Run Park bicyclists

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neighborhood walking or on a bike.

10.F.1d—Connect neighborhoods east of FM 1826 to the neighborhoods west of FM 1826. Stakeholders feel this would be an important connection because of major destinations such as Seton Hospital and the middle school located along FM 1826.

10.F.1e—Provide trail connections between the Austin Community College (ACC) campus and the local neighborhoods.

10.F.1f—Provide a trail connection from Latta Branch and Legend Oaks Parks to U.S. Highway 290.

10.F.1g—Provide a trail connection from Latta Branch Park to Slaughter Lane.

10.F.1h—Oak Hill residents should be encouraged to join and support the Oak Hill Trails Association to continue their work towards implementing trail projects in the Oak Hill area. They should continue to gather necessary funds, resources, and support to increase connectivity in Oak Hill.

10.F.1i—Provide more police patrols in Windmill Run Park. Currently, residents in the area are involved in patrolling the neighborhoods.

10.F.1j—Seek methods to maintain security of neighborhoods adjacent to trails, greenbelts, and parks.



Figure 10-10: Travis Country Trail Cyclists

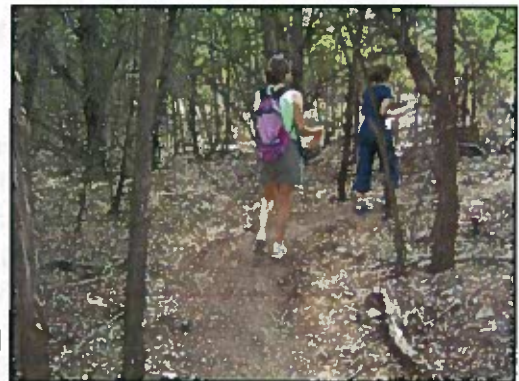


Figure 10-11: Travis Country Trail Hikers

Oak Hills Trails Association (OHTA)

(The following information was written by Richard Perkins, vice chair of the Oak Hill Trails Association)

Purpose

The Oak Hill Trails Association (OHTA) was formed in March 2007 as an outgrowth of the Oak Hill Neighborhood Planning process with the support of the City of Austin Oak Hill Neighborhood Planning Staff. The members of OHTA will identify, develop, and manage the construction and maintenance of recreational hike and bike trails as well as assist in the development of a commuter bike trail in Oak Hill.

Scope of OHTA

The project scope consists of the area included within a six mile radius of the intersection of U.S. Highway 290 West and State Highway 71 West in Oak Hill (known as the "Y" at Oak Hill). OHTA does not expect to actually be the builders of the trails, but will help to manage, mow, cut, scout, and further promote the trails with the interest of increasing connectivity in the Oak Hill area. It is expected that funds will be raised from public and private sources to pay for professional trail builders to construct the trails.

Destinations and Points of Interest in Oak Hill

The majority of the members of OHTA participated in the Oak Hill Neighborhood Planning process from its inception in October 2005. The group has participated in many public community meetings and in most of the Neighborhood Planning Steering Committee meetings. This gives the group a good understanding of the points of interest that are important to hikers and bikers of Oak Hill in 2007 and the areas that will be important for Oak Hill hikers and bikers 10 or 20 years into the future. OHTA members hope to connect these points of interest with hike and bike trail networks. The following are destination points and points of interest that OHTA members have identified in Oak Hill thus far:

- Austin Community College – Pinnacle Campus
- Barton Creek Greenbelt
- Shops at the Y in Oak Hill (U.S. Highway 290 West at State Highway 71 West)



OHTA members on a field trip with Council Member Brewster McCracken

—Photo taken by Rick Perkins



Informal dirt path at Dick Nichols Park

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- Williamson Creek
- High Tech Corridor on William Cannon between Southwest Parkway and U.S. Highway 290 West
- Seton Southwest Hospital and surrounding neighborhood areas
- Soccer Fields on Slaughter Lane near Escarpment
- Dick Nichols Park
- St. Andrews School
- Baseball Fields at U.S. Highway 290 West and Williamson Creek
- Southwest Parkway
- Slaughter Creek Wildlands
- Future Southwest Regional Park (planned but currently not funded by City)
- Future Downtown Oak Hill Entertainment District
- Escarpment Village (Escarpment at Slaughter)



Gaines Creek to Industrial Oaks

Types of Trails and Locations in Planning

OHTA is looking to develop primarily two types of trails:

- 1) Recreational trails used for casual walking, bike riding, etc (e.g. the Town Lake Trail in downtown Austin).
- 2) Commuter bike trail that conforms to the requirements of American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials so that bikes can safely pass pedestrians on a shared trail.

Prior to the official formation of OHTA, the members had been to destination points around Oak Hill to determine current and future needs of recreational and commuter hike/bike trails. OHTA's planning area comprises of a large six mile radius (corresponding to about 112 square miles). The hike and bike trails currently being planned are divided into sectors of the OHTA planning area such as: northeast, southeast, northwest, southwest, and central due to the large size of the area.

Commuter Bike Trails are proposed as follows:

- From MoPac Bike Bridge southwest to Southwest Parkway, crossing under Southwest Parkway at the Mimosa Crossing 9 foot tunnels.



OHTA members by Freescale

- From Mimosa Crossing west parallel to Southwest Parkway and following Gaines Creek to Industrial Oaks Drive.
- From Industrial Oaks Drive west/northwest to join with Parkwood Drive in Oak Acres Neighborhood.
- West to Vega Lane turning either north on Vega back to Southwest Parkway or south on Vega towards the "Y" at Oak Hill.
- South on Vega to a crossing at William Cannon, join commuter trail on William Cannon, or continue across William Cannon to follow powerline easement across Freescale property, then joining with recreational easement on Aviara property to Old Bee Caves Drive.
- Turn left on Old Bee Caves Drive (after the road is improved) and follow it to a to-be-determined crossing over Williamson Creek and to the "Y" shopping area on State Highway 71.
- From 5 above, turn left on William Cannon and follow it to Escarpment Drive and turn right. Follow Escarpment (already marked) for 8 miles to Highway 45 South.
- Turn right on Highway 45 South and continue on shoulder to FM 1826.
- Turn right on FM 1826 and continue on a new future bikeway parallel to FM 1826, to a new bike only entrance to access the ROW of the undeveloped Davis Lane intersection with FM 1826 (just north of Slaughter Lane).
- From the Davis Lane ROW continue east until joining with the paved Davis Lane and continue on to Escarpment or eventually Mopac.
- Instead of turning on Davis Lane, continue up FM 1826 to U.S. Highway 290 West, to a future bike lane or bikeway on the feeder roads of U.S. Highway 290 West. Travel west to William Cannon Drive or before reaching U.S. Highway 290 West, turn right and travel east on a new bikeway on HEB property that will join with Escarpment Drive.



Along Gaines Creek by Parkway Office Building

Other commuter bike trails will be identified at a later date

Recreational Hike and Bike Trails are proposed as follows:

- Barton Creek Trail to Gaines Creek Park
- Gaines Creek Park up through Gaines Creek Watershed
- Gaines Creek to Industrial Oaks, then West to St. Andrews School
- Gaines Creek to Industrial Oaks, then south to Monterrey Oaks
- Monterrey Oaks west to Baseball Fields at Joe Tanner
- Baseball Fields at Joe Tanner northwest up Williamson Creek to the "Y"

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- The “Y” west across State Highway 71 to proposed Downtown Oak Hill
- Proposed Downtown Oak Hill to west to FM 1826 and Seton Hospital
- Seton Hospital east behind HEB Property to Escarpment
- Seton Hospital to connect with Granada Hills and Phoenix Pass
- Seton Hospital south to Davis Lane Right of Way
- David Lane east through floodplain to Escarpment Drive
- Escarpment Drive to Dick Nichols Park
- Dick Nichols Park to Will Hampton Library and east under Mopac
- St. Andrews School to William Cannon / Rialto Drive
- Rialto Drive west to Aviara and Lantana Ridge
- Other trails into the Slaughter Creek Park area

Figure 10-3 on the following page is a map of trail recommendations that are currently being pursued by the Oak Hill Trails Association.

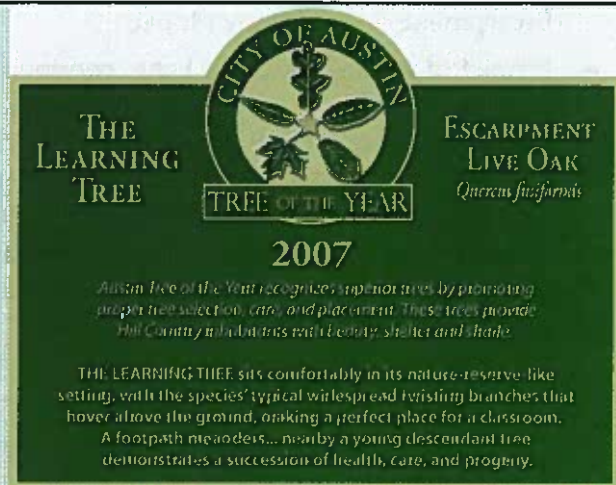
If you would like to join OHTA or want to make a donation, please go to www.oakhilltrails.org/ for membership information.

TREE OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Residents can nominate healthy trees within Austin for the Tree of the Year Award. The program was created in March 2007 to identify and celebrate beautiful trees that are unique to the Austin Hill Country. Every year, Austin residents will be able to choose one large and one small tree to be recognized. Large trees are those that provide significant canopy coverage (such as Live Oaks and Cedar Elms). Small trees do not achieve the size of large trees at maturity (such as Texas Mountain Laurels and Yaupon Hollies).

The 2007 Large Tree of the Year award went to **The Learning Tree**, located behind the Hampton Branch Library in Oak Hill.

For more information on the Tree of the Year program, please visit www.ci.austin.tx.us/treeoftheyear.



WildlifeAustin



Wildlife Austin—Keep Austin Wild

The City of Austin and National Wildlife Federation challenge your Neighborhood to create homes for wildlife by taking the HABITAT CHALLENGE!

Austin is working to become Texas' first NWF certified Community Wildlife Habitat. Certifying your yard as a habitat with NWF will help Austin reach its goal for community-wide certification.

Make sure your yard provides these habitat basics:

✓ **Food:** Native plants provide wildlife with a buffet of nectar, pollen, seeds, berries and more.

✓ **Water:** A reliable water source is the key element for the perfect habitat for a variety of wildlife.

✓ **Cover:** Evergreen shrubs, and brush piles offer wildlife shelter from predators and bad weather.

✓ **Places to raise young:** Dense shrubs, a nesting box or pond are necessary for wildlife to mate and raise their young.

For more information, go to the National Wildlife Federation's website: <http://www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife> and the City of Austin's Parks and Recreation website: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/wildlifehabitat.htm>.

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Chapter 11: COMMUNITY LIFE

Life in Oak Hill is bolstered by the preceding chapters. A walkable neighborhood gives residents more opportunities to meet and interact casually. A Town Center will give Oak Hill a more coherent presence, a central place to go that can be shared by everyone. Stewardship of the environment connects residents to the natural features that make Oak Hill unique.

This chapter, however, focuses narrowly on the things that sustain communities directly: the continuity of history, public safety, and community interaction. These areas may not be directly related to Land Use and Zoning, but nevertheless are crucial in enhancing a place's quality of life.

Lastly, Linda Flint, a kind Oak Hill resident of 20 years, contributes some of her insights about life in Oak Hill.



Figure 11-1: Kids playing at Windmill Run Park



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

11.A. Preserve valued historic sites.

11.A.1

Instill a sense of pride among Oak Hill community members by preserving and celebrating the historic value of landmarks.

11.A.1a—Preserve the Oak Hill Pizza Garden, formerly known as the Patton Store.

11.A.1b—Preserve and maintain the Convict Hill Quarry Park on Convict Hill Road.

11.A.1c—Preserve the old Oak Hill Elementary school.

11.A.1d—New development and redevelopment projects should make a sincere attempt to preserve the older oak trees along William Cannon Drive.

11.B. Ensure the safety of persons and property.

11.B.1

Address crime in the Oak Hill area by creating a comprehensive crime management and safety program for the Oak Hill planning area.

11.B.1a—Increase coordination between Oak Hill stakeholders and Travis County.

11.B.1b—Increase coordination between Austin Police Department and the Oak Hill community members to create an informational session about the law enforcement services in the Oak Hill area.

11.B.1c—Stakeholders feel that a police substation is needed in the Oak Hill planning area to address criminal activity.

11.B.2

Coordinate and enhance educational safety programs for the Oak Hill community.

11.B.2a—Conduct bike safety programs for the adult and youth population of the area.

11.B.2b—Encourage forest fire prevention and awareness programs in the area.



11.C. All Oak Hill residents should have readily accessible, quality community and public services.

11.C.1

Encourage locating community and public services in one area of Oak Hill to ease accessibility by area residents.

11.C.1a—Build a cultural and historical community center that would include a civic center, senior activity center, and a center for performance and visual arts.

11.C.1b—Cluster services in areas that can accommodate the amount of traffic that would be generated by the cultural center.

11.C.2

Expand the library services in the Oak Hill area to accommodate areas that are farthest from existing libraries.

11.C.2a—Community members would like Oak Hill libraries to be in close proximity to recreational facilities such as a pool.

11.C.2b—Encourage Oak Hill residents to volunteer at Oak Hill libraries.

11.C.3

Ensure school capacity is adequately addressed.

11.C.3a—Locate elementary schools closer to single-family neighborhoods so children can walk to schools.

11.C.3b—Locate an additional high school in the planning area.

11.C.3c—Encourage coordination between Austin Independent School District (AISD) and community groups to learn more about long-range plans for AISD.

11.D. Promote camaraderie, community spirit, and communication among neighborhoods.

11.D.1

Encourage coordination with Oak Hill residents and neighborhoods on issues of mutual interest and concern.

11.D.1a—Encourage all qualified, unregistered neighborhood associations to become recognized members of Oak Hill Association of Neighborhoods (OHAN).



Chapter 11: COMMUNITY LIFE

11.D.1b—Encourage businesses to join Oak Hill Business and Professional Association (OHBP).

11.D.1c—Oak Hill residents, stakeholders and Neighborhood Planning Contact Team should continue to educate themselves on the new zoning categories Neighborhood Commercial and Neighborhood Mixed Use as well as the overall effect on development and land use of this large neighborhood plan and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) in order to make informed decisions.
